

Hell's Mouth by A P Bateman

5 stars

Bang up to date story line but still a timeless subject

A P Bateman has added a new hero to his stable to join the popular Rob Stone and Alex King. DCI Ross O'Bryan is a bit of a loner. He is an unconventional copper who is quite happy to use his fists as often as his brain – sometimes even together. His attitude focuses on getting results by whatever means are effective which brings him into conflict with colleagues. He is a flawed character and has very human frailties which should endear him to new and old Bateman fans alike.

The story opens in south Cornwall which is an area I already love and know well so I warmed to the task of reading this new crime thriller immediately. Ross is convalescing following an incident in London, where he is normally based, in which he was badly injured. It transpires that his boss has an ulterior motive in loaning him his Cornish hideaway. Something is going on in the area and it has nothing to do with tourism.

So, Ross is rather starting on the back foot. He is acting in an unofficial capacity and soon falls out with the local head of CID. His choice in women is, quite frankly, suspect and he quickly finds he also won't be getting on with the local gentry and their entourage. However, as we very quickly discover, none of this deters our hero from getting stuck in.

The dialogue is gritty and powerful. The action is violent and gory. The characters are very well drawn and despite his unorthodox and illegal methods I couldn't help but be drawn to Ross and secretly wish that there were perhaps more around just like him. The plot and sub plots are complex but they clearly thread their way individually through the novel to reach an explosive conclusion. In short, it's another first-class result.

I highly recommend "Hell's Mouth" and very much look forward to the next instalment.

mr zorg

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book to review.